

Transcription – SUFTT 1/18/24 Guest: David Jenkins

This is Stand Up For The Truth. It's Thursday, January 18, 2024. For our frequency listeners in Northeast Wisconsin, I see this Mary, right now the temperature is at zero, but it's going to be warming up to a nice balmy 14 above zero today. So we've got the chance for snow again tonight and tomorrow. Get those electric vehicles started. So those are listening around the world on Q90FM.com slash listen. Hope you're staying warm. Mary Danielson here with a fresh new podcast. Yes, good morning. We have Dave Jenkins on today and I truly believe that he has a message we all need to hear from time to time and that is about contentment, endurance, and tough times and we have a lot to talk about with that. I'm really looking forward to it. His book, Contentment, the Journey of a Lifetime, is what we're going to be moving through this morning. So let's read a scripture as always and then we will pray together. My scripture today is Psalm 130, 1 to 6. Out of the depths I have cried to you, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications. If you, Lord, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with you that you may be feared. I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I do hope. My soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning. Yes, more than those who watch for the morning. What great verses. Let's pray with me this morning. Lord, how wonderful it is to be able to come boldly before your throne with our needs and our struggles and our praises, Lord, because of the work of your Son on our behalf. We thank you for the grace that teaches our hearts both to fear and to lead us home when our fears are relieved through such a great salvation. We thank you for our guest today, Dave, and we ask that you continue for continued fruit, for the kingdom, for wisdom for him, for opportunities to share the hope that is in him for many open doors. We lift up his loved ones as well for good health and protection and for all needs to be met according to our provision that we have in Christ Jesus. In his name we pray, amen. All right, Dave Jenkins, he's a writer, editor, and speaker. He serves as the executive director of Servants of Grace Ministries, the Executive Editor of Theology for Life Magazine, and host and producer of Equipping You in Grace podcast. He's also a contributor to and producer of Contending for the Word. He's the author of The Word Explored, the problem with biblical literacy and what to do about it, and then The Word Matters, Defending Biblical Authority Against the Spirit of the Age, and then, like I said, Contentment, the Journey of a Lifetime, which is what we're looking at today.

Servantsofgrace.org is the website. Dave, welcome back to Stand Up for the Truth. Mary, it's such a pleasure to be with you for the first time. Yeah, go ahead. I know you've been on before. I think you were on with David one other time. Yes, yes, but it's a privilege to be with you and with the Standing Up for the Truth audience, so thank you so much. Yes, yes. Tell us a bit about what the listener can find at Servants of Grace, because obviously you've just been doing a lot of heavy lifting for the kingdom as far as the word goes and biblical literacy. What will people find at the website? Articles, podcasts? What's there? Yeah, yeah. We have over 300 writers from all over the world. We have a plethora of podcasts from the pastor, director of the pastor, to the biblical counselor, to apologetics. So we deal with false teaching, ideologies that raise themselves against the knowledge of God to help people take every thought captive into the abyss of Christ. We, like you guys, we do interviews and try to hit the important topics. We have a digital magazine, Theology for Life, and with this book, actually, now we have a publishing company. So I joke and jest, maybe the next thing is a conference I don't know. We'll see what the Lord would have us do in this province, but yeah. Yeah, we say we my wife And I always stay plenty busy working for the Lord and for his glory and honor alone for the building up of the church So that's what you know that's that's what you'll find lots of content 20 almost 24 years of content so you can just have at it. It's all free. So, you know, we put it out there for free and we just want to serve and help the people of God. So that's a little bit about what we're doing. Praise the Lord. There's a lot of meaty stuff here. It's not the shallow end of the pool, that's for sure. A lot of great content. So I would encourage people again, servantsofgrace.org. And talking about contentment, Dave, do we ever need a book like this today? A lot of people I have found and people tell me they're coping with a lot of different trials and difficulties. And when I think about the brevity of life and at my age, this is this is fairly daily, and about believers that I've known who've gone on to be with the Lord, I think well you know some had short seasons with Christ and others 40, 50 years or more where they've had all manners and seasons. You know times of joy, times of sometimes deep darkness, mind-numbing difficulties that don't get resolved. It's almost like some of our struggles walk along with us as companions after a while to remind us that we're weak and He is strong. So wouldn't it be great, what I'm trying to say, if we would get saved and just go home to be with the Lord, but it usually doesn't work that way. And so we enter into that new life, we really don't know what's ahead. At first, all we know is what we've left behind. So Dave, what's a pilgrim to do in these anxious times? Kick

us off here, I know you start the book out talking about Pilgrim's Progress and John Bunyan, so just lay a little foundation for us if you would. Yeah, you know, John Bunyan was an amazing man. Charles Spurgeon, the Prince of Preachers, said of him, if you cut him, he'll bleed but bleed. Now he's not literally saying cut him and you know he's gonna bleed the Bible, okay, so just to clarify that but you know, it meant that he was so saturated in the word He was called the tinkerers preacher. And so his preaching was I don't want to say revered but highly thought of and highly sought after even among some of the Illuminaries of his time like John Owen and many others would love to be able to sit down and hear from somebody like You know Owen and and you know, we know that hear from somebody like Owen. We know that, maybe your listeners don't know, but Pilgrim's Progress is the second best sold book next to the Word of God. It is a great summary of the Christian life, but it's an allegory, it's a story. It's a journey that Christian, that Bunyan writes about in Pilgrim's Progress. He takes a Christian from his home and takes him to the Slav despond where he's just really discouraged and doubting the Lord and he takes him along the journey and when he gets off the journey he gets distracted. Now who doesn't identify with that, right? And then there's a guy named Evangelist in the story. What Evangelist does is he reminds him of the truth of the gospel. Now, raise your hand if you need a friend to remind you about what Christ did for you. Everybody, right? So then he also encounters an interpreter. An interpreter helps him. I should back up here. He encounters on the journey, he kindly realizes about the righteousness of God in Christ alone and then his bags drop off because he's wearing a backpack and so his backpack falls off which is symbolic of him actually becoming a child of God in this story. And then he meets an interpreter so he learns how to read and study the Bible. He encounters Apollyon where he learns about spiritual warfare and all of this is on the way to the celestial city, heaven. Really the allegory, the point of it and why it's so powerful for people is it describes really the Christian life in between what we would call the times, the times that Christ started when he said in John 19, 30, it is finished and the time when Christ will return and really it describes the life in between those two times we could say. And so that's the beauty of this story. And so when I started thinking about this story, I thought, man, what better way to frame this idea of contentment, because really what contentment is, by definition, it is a disposition of heart. And so, do we have peace with God? We have peace with God, Romans 5, 1 says, through the death of Christ. And so, like I quoted John 19, 30, it's finished. That's how we have this peace. But Paul will talk about, in

Philippians 4, this practical peace that is ours because we're united to Christ by faith and we're indwelt by the Spirit. That peace is to become more evident, more real, if you will, as we walk out this walk of faith in communion with the Lord. I'll just say this at the outset. When I started writing this book, I realized that I really struggled with, and when I talk about this in the book, I struggle with contentment. What I realized in writing this is I struggle with this idea of contentment pretty much my whole life. Now, ouch, you know? I've been saying this book was not hard content or substance-wise. This book for me was an application project, and so that was really hard. Because what I realized, especially as we talk about Philippians 4, we have the ability to do all the things that Paul talks about there, and in other places, because of what I mentioned earlier, where you're united to Christ by faith, we have the Spirit. If you're in Christ, if you're in the Lord, if you're in Him, those are phrases that refer to our union with Christ, our identity in Christ, if you will. But what I realized really was that I was really, in a lot of ways, just self-sufficient. And Paul even has something to say about that in verse 13 of that chapter. He's countering our tendency to self-sufficiency. And that's a really important thing. But for me, what I realized is the reason I didn't have practical peace is because I needed to rest more. And it took me back to a conversation when I was doing a lot of things in the local church when we lived in Idaho, and one of the deacons said to me, Dave, make sure that you enjoy your union with Christ. And when we moved from southern Idaho, so Boise area, to southern California, I didn't have that support network that I had, and so I kept thinking about that idea. Am I enjoying my union with Christ? How am I doing that? And then it led to a whole bunch of other questions and just the realization that, man, I'm really, and around this time, I'm starting to work on this topic. And so the Lord really worked me over in a lot of ways. And like I realized as I was coming to the title, the best way to describe contentment is really like the subtitle says. It's a journey of a lifetime. Meaning that, and I just want to be clear, it is possible to have contentment in because of the, like we talked, like I just said about the peace of God and that peace of God being made real. That's the overarching idea of contentment. But the reality of it is still being worked into our lives. And so we're never gonna get there until we go to be with the Lord. That's such a great way to put it. And in the book there's a definition of contentment and I don't remember who said this, so I apologize for that, but you may know off the top of your head. That sweet, inward, quiet, gracious frame of spirit which freely submits to and delights in God's wise and fatherly disposal in every condition. Wow, that's loaded, but it is so true. And so when I think of

contentment, I think of 1 Timothy 6, 6-10, you know, godliness with contentment is great gain. And boy, if that definition is contentment, that really would be great gain. Because he says, we brought nothing into this world, here's the context, and we can take nothing out. So basically, what is there left? It's not stuff, you know, it's not idolatry, it's just like you said, our union with Christ really is all that there is. So that's a good start. But Dave, there are things that hinder our contentment. I ran across a social media post recently, just a couple of days ago. Some people were discussing contending for the faith and some verses that were tough to hear about sin and false teaching. Somebody jumped in and said, you Christians are so negative. It should all be about joy. It should be about sin and trouble. You make people feel guilty. That's what Christians do best. They should be happy people. And I said, well, if we didn't talk about sin and people falling short, how would they ever feel the weight of their sin or come to the end of themselves? And I'm afraid that the church really thinks that it's all about how we feel and it's all about just being joyful whether we are or not. So what are some of the things that hinder contentment? Let's talk about anxiety and depression and things like that. What do you think hinders? What derails us from being content? Is it our childhood issues? What would those things be? Yeah, you know, these are really good questions, but the main thing that you're alluding to, I think, is actually a great hindrance to having real contentment and as you're living to it starts with our theology What do we believe about God? Do we trust and believe his word in and even the larger issue is are we are we taking that word home? And are we functionally? Applying it to our life and to our ministry and to our to our teaching over and against you know we would say Theological liberalism, which is so rampant today. It's a huge issue But and it really shows up actually in the issue of emotions Because too many people too many Christians today are driven By a what we call a theology from below Which is where your theology and scripture run on the same train tracks if you will instead of a theology from above where we have the Word of God as the center place, the inspired, inerrant, sufficient, clear, and authoritative and binding word. And so that is a big issue, because when you place your feelings at the level of objective truth, the standard that we have in the authoritative word, that's where you're going to always have a problem. And we all do it from various times. We wonder, why are we discouraged? Why are we anxious? Why are we struggling? Well, the question that you have to do some assessment. And this is, by the way, this isn't navel gazing. This is 2 Corinthians 13, 5. Examine yourself to see if you're in the faith. Examine the idea isn't even, the idea is there is

how are you really doing? And this is why we have to take the truth home. We have to ask questions like, "Why am I so anxious?" "Why am I so discouraged?" "How am I doing at rest?" We're not meant to work all the time. We have to take time to rest. We have to observe. Whatever your view is, you still have to have a day off to honor the Lord and to spend with Him. Whatever your view of the Sabbath is, the point is that you have a day off and you honor the Lord, preferably on the Lord's Day, so Sunday, you know, with God's people in your local church under a biblically qualified male pastor, just to be clear there, and gathering with, you know, the fellowship of God's people. And so how else are you gonna fight, you know, against, you know, the distractions and everything that happened. You not only need the church, but you need others in the church to be coming alongside of you and speaking into your life. That's why I'm an advocate of daily Bible reading, five to 10 minutes every day, getting into God's word, not out of duty, but of delight in the Lord and because of who He is. The Psalms talk about this, delight in the Lord. And so it's delight, it's not a duty. It is a duty, but it's what I call a delightful duty. And so that's the personal side of things and that's the corporate side of things. Now how do we fight the distractions? Well, we need to talk about what is the Lord doing through his word. And this is where we can turn to a chapter like John 16, and we can see what Jesus says about the Holy Spirit. He talks about how the Holy Spirit is convicting us of the truth. We know that Jesus said in the Upper Room Discourse, running from John 13 through 16 there that He would send that the Holy Spirit the comforter so that not only is the spirit going to convict you with the word He's also going to comfort you and those are two those are two very important things So when we when we do get distracted that the Lord is going to convict us That's not a that's that this the new people get very scared as Christians and and they they they run away from that Well, that's that's why you that's why you might struggle with They run away from that. Well, that's why you might struggle with things like guilt and shame and bitterness and why many Christians struggle with assurance because maybe you're running away from the very thing that God has said, this is for your good, this is what I'm doing in your life. And so don't run away from conviction. Instead view it as a blessing. God is loving you so much because of Christ that He's exposing your sin and helping you to see where you're at and to help you assess that because He's the sovereign of the universe, right? He's the one who knows you, He's the one who sees your heart, He knows your motivation, He knows the hairs on your head. So this is the Lord and that's a good thing. But He's also going to comfort you. And if that's not enough for you,

even in the midst of everything that's happening right now, you have one in Jesus the High Priest, whoever lives, the Bible says, to make intercession for you. And He is summoning you, Hebrews 4, 14 through 16, says, before his throne of grace, 1 John 2, 1 through 2 says that Jesus is your advocate. So you know this is this is some good theology for you to lay the foundation, but to to fight you know the distractions, the things that happen, we really have to do what the author of Hebrews says in Hebrews 12, 1. We have to look to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. And who doesn't need to do that, right? Because it's so easy when you turn on the news, right? When you turn on your news feed on Facebook or, you know, X now, it's Twitter or Instagram or on and on, and you go in these Facebook groups like you were just talking about, and you see these comments from people, or you watch, you know, false teacher videos, and you see what's happening and what people are saying. And it's so discouraging. And you know what? I'm right there with you. You know, as somebody who is on the front lines talking out against false teaching and worldview issues, it is incredibly discouraging. But that's why, and I often talk with my friends, we encourage each other that do that kind of work. I'm always saying, brother, sister, don't forget, don't forget how are you doing at your Bible reading, how are you doing at your local church attendance, how are you doing it doing life with God's people. Sometimes the best thing is just to unplug and and to get away and just to realize, hey, I don't have to be on this this medium. I don't have to be on my smartphone all the time, checking and getting updates. And sometimes, maybe if we're honest, maybe you need to delete that app and just realize, hey, this isn't good for me. I can't handle it. It's actually hindering my walk with God. If that's the case, I would just plead with you. Delete X off your phone, you know, get off. I wish I'd be frank with your listeners. I wish I wasn't even on social media. The only reason I'm on social media is because I'm an author and authors have to be on social media, unfortunately. So that's kind of where, you know, it's a personal thing, but it's here, hear the principle. Hear the principle there that you need to take the time to ask yourself, take yourself in the hand, ask yourself, why am I anxious? And maybe that means that you need to go talk to a biblical counselor. Maybe that means that you need to go talk to your, if you're a guy, you need to talk to your pastor. Or maybe if you're a lady, you need to talk to the women's ministry leader at your local church. Or you need to talk to the pastor's wife, or a seasoned friend, a trustworthy friend. And I just wanna say that, just one thing about that really quick, that when I say trusted, trustworthy friend, I mean, are they biblically solid? Are they gonna point

you to the truth? And are they gonna be theologically solid where they can actually provide help to you, they can walk you through? But, you know, contentment looks, we could talk about that a lot, but one of my mentors said that God is hand tailoring the situations of our lives. And so understanding how the Lord is at work. John Piper once said that God is doing a thousand things and we might see one of those things that he's doing. But it's that one thing, right, if we're honest, that can help us in the midst of all these things that are happening in our life. And to see and to know that, hey, we're remembering like the Israelites were supposed to, right? We're remembering the Lord, we're remembering his word, we're remembering his work, we're looking back, but we're also looking ahead to where he's had. And there's nothing wrong with that. That's not navel gazing. That's actually what we're supposed to do. Dave, you talk about the times of life because we are all going through seasons. You could be in your 20s and 30s trying to figure out what life is about. You could be in that childbearing age which has its own, you've got young kids, you've got your own set of difficulties. Life itself brings seasons that make us hopefully look up and realize that we can't depend on ourselves really for anything in this life. God is at work. But you kind of alluded to something, we have about five minutes in this particular segment about the chasing that God employs. I just want to mention sometimes, and it is unpleasant, but the Bible says that those he loves he disciplines. If we're not chastened, we might really have something to be depressed about down the road. So when we counsel others that are in a dark place, or when pastors counsel others, it might be tempting to try and make them feel better, but really, how do you not get in God's way, basically? Like you said, you need to have a biblical knowledge. The people that counsel you need to understand the Bible. And how can we encourage people and comfort them as a body, but also to discern whether they are actually being disciplined by God and to look deeply to see if there's something, you know, if we've lost that fear of God or if we just were in an idolatrous thing, how can the church help people without getting in God's way to accomplish what God wants to do? Well, I think we have to ask them, you know, as they come to us, we have to ask them the question. You know, as we get to know them, as we obviously have those conversations, where are the areas in which you're tempted? Is it with pornography? Well, I mean, you know, and we need to remember, by the way, that we're talking about our fellowship with God being interrupted. We're not talking about our security with God. A lot of people get that confused. We're talking about our fellowship with God being interrupted. That's why we have a need to confess, as 1



John 1 says, our sin to the Lord, and he is faithful and just, forgive us. So asking and asking questions, okay, so is it pornography? Okay, well, you know, then we need to talk about how do you fight against temptation? What is purity? What is God's holiness? How do we live before the face of God? But this is then a different question if it's anxiety. Why are you anxious? Is it because money is tight? So are you how are you doing it your budgeting? Maybe you need to look at getting a different job You know or on and on you know to help provide for your family. Maybe your spouse needs to get a job How is that going to look like and we have to we have to think about and listen? What is the root cause we have to get to the root cause. We too often, in the church today I think, we have this idea of, okay, here's the theology, but then we don't take that good theology that we've talked about today already, and we don't take it and we don't apply it. And it's the applying it, you have lots of people who have lots of theological knowledge out there, but the most theologically literate people are often, in my experience being in ministry for 24 years, they're the least able to take this knowledge and apply it. And we have to, as ministry leaders, even pastors or Bible teachers, women's leaders, we have to help people not only to be equipped with good theology, but we have to help them learn how to take themselves by the hand with that theology and apply it. And this is, I think, one of the best ways. This would be a biblical counseling approach. And biblical counseling is just simply a form of discipleship. It's a one-on-one type ministry where we're reminding each other. It's a focused ministry. So there's a difference between walking with somebody and discipling them, this is a very formal kind of process that biblical discipleship is, but it is an extension, we could say, of discipleship. And so that's really important. And you don't have to be certified to be a biblical counselor. You can be certified. But I also just want to say to the person that is struggling with anxiety, there might be a time, we first have to say, where you need to assess yourself with the Word of God. We would absolutely say that first. But there also in God's common grace sometimes you might need to go to the doctor because you're struggling with sleep and those kind of things and those kind of things. But we first want to go to what God's Word has to say about those things and then we then we you know ask those questions. So I think that that would be a good way just for people to think through and ask the questions. How am I really doing myself? How am I doing at taking God's word home? And do I need additional help or am I, you know, good here? And it doesn't hurt to have those conversations. Dave, we've got to take a break here. We are talking to Dave Jenkins today here on Stand Up for the Truth and

his book Contentment, the Journey of a Lifetime. Servantsofgrace.org, you can also find the book there, you can purchase it for yourself. We're talking about contentment and I want to talk about suffering in the next part and I want to talk about Philippians 4.

Welcome back to Stand Up With The Truth for this Thursday. I almost forgot what day it was. Thursday, January the 18th and we are speaking with Dave Jenkins and he is the author of Contentment The Journey of a Lifetime and I'm really glad for that subtitle there because that is absolutely true. And the website is servantsofgrace.org. And I want to just, real briefly, Dave, before we jump into Philippians 4, because that is the meat of the book here, in the intro to the book you actually say, believers don't know if they should reach out and say that they're anxious or depressed or struggling. And sometimes it makes them feel like they have a lack of faith or they're a failure somehow. And we talked about how the church can be equipping. And also the thing that came up while we were on the break here is Proverbs 12, 25. It mentions depression. It says, anxiety in the heart of a man causes depression. So there you have it right there. People say the Bible doesn't address that. It does. And then it says, but a good word makes it glad. Dave, your thoughts on that? And then we can just launch into Philippians, the be anxious for nothing, Chapter 4 of the Bible. Yeah, yeah. You know, one of the, actually, that's a good passage, Proverbs 12, 25, but, you know, throughout the Psalms we can say, you know, the Psalm that says in Psalm 42, 11, Why are you cast down, O my soul? Why are you in turmoil with me? Notice what he says now. does now, hope in God for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God. And you see this, that all throughout the Psalms, the psalmist is downcast, he's discouraged. And then what does he do? He takes himself, like we were talking about, by the hand, he even asked himself a question there, in turmoil, within me, then he's taking himself by the hand and he says, hope in God for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God. And you see this throughout the entire book of Psalms. That's why we have to assess ourselves biblically with God's word. And then sometimes we need to go, as I said, then to, you know, the, in God's common grace, he gives us doctors. A lot of people will go the opposite direction. They'll immediately go to doctors and they won't go to God's Word. That causes a big problem because that undermines the sufficiency of Scripture. It's actually a very large issue today, but we have to ask ourselves questions that God's Word gives us. So like, you know, why are you, what is causing you personally for it not to be well as that great hymn says? Why is it

not well with my soul? Why are you being prone soul to wander from the God you say you love? You know, we say that we love the Lord, but it's always a matter of application. It's not just the Bible is not only concerned with giving us doctrine, which is teaching, but it's also concerned with how are we doing, you know, and going to that famous chapter, as we will, in verse 9 of Philippians 4, it says that we're supposed to practice these things. James 1.22, don't be all hearers only but doers of the word. So there is a practicing, you know, Ephesians 5, walk in a manner worthy of the Lord. So God is concerned not only with you knowing the good theology, but he's concerned with you applying that theology. And it's the applying of the theology where we get to contentment. Now remember what we said about contentment at the beginning. Contentment is a disposition of the heart. We have peace with God through the death of Christ. That peace is being made real in our lives, in our experience, through the ministry of the Spirit because we're united to Christ by faith in his name. And so Paul actually goes here in verse 2, excuse me, in verse 1 of Philippians 4, when he says, Therefore my brothers whom I love and long for, my joy and my crown. Notice what he says here, stand firm thus in the Lord my beloved. This is a church that Paul loved dearly. He has a theme that he's writing, he never corrects this church, he's writing from prison, but he has a theme of joy. He wants them to find joy in the Lord. This phrase, I think I mentioned this, in the Lord, in Him, in Christ, is used in Paul's epistles just so that we know this. When you see that phrase, you should think of yourself as a Christian because that's you. If you belong to Christ by faith, you repent in Him, put your trust and hope in Christ, you belong to Christ. So I'm going to ask this question. Have you done that? Have you repented and believed and put your hope and trust in Christ? Or are you outside of Christ? And so you need to repent and believe because if you haven't done that, you have no peace with God and you're pursuing, as Solomon said in Ecclesiastes 3, you're pursuing the vanity of life. And this is why we have to talk about this, because if I don't at least mention that we can't really get to the heart of what Paul is saying. And he's writing to Christians. He's writing to encourage this church that he dearly loves. And so this phrase, In the Lord, is really full of gospel hope. So then in verse, if we jump down to verse 4 of Philippians, he says, Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I say rejoice. Verse 5, let your reasonableness be known to everyone. And then he says something really, really fascinating. I don't know if people really camp on this or they've thought about this, but Paul says there at the end of verse 5, the Lord is at hand. Think with me about that for a second. How many times have you heard a Christian, and I've heard many Christians,

just suggest this, you know, the Lord isn't interested in me. I don't know if the Lord cares about me in this situation. I don't know what's happening with my finances, so I'm really concerned that the Lord doesn't really care about me in this specific situation. And they might not say it that way, but it's definitely implied. Because they're struggling. They're struggling in their emotions to believe the truth. But what Paul is doing here, he's reminding us that the Lord is at hand. That means that he's near. And we need to remember that we use this word eminence to describe this. The Lord is near, he cares, he sees, he knows everything. But we also use the word immutable, God is unchanging. So God is not only near, but he's unchanging. What this means is, this is a good thing, because this God who's come near to us in Christ, born under the sentence of death in the incarnation. He's come to die, Matthew 1, 21. For us, He said that it is finished. He's given us new life in His name. He's given us a spirit. He's given us hope and meaning and value and purpose. This is a God who says that He's near. And we have to understand this because if you just skip over that and you miss that phrase, what you're going to miss is that, if you will, you have to charge your phone, right? You have to plug it in. To charge your laptop, you have to plug it in. If you don't plug something in, guess what? You have no power supply. I would argue that this is really a linchpin to what Paul wants to say and what Paul is going to say to this church, to us. So if we don't pause and really think hard and long about the Lord's nearness and how he cares about us, we're gonna miss, we're really gonna, we all want to read verse 6, right? Do not be anxious about anything but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving. Let your requests be made known to God. And then of course verse 7, and the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. I mentioned earlier verse 7, the peace of God is that's the peace that's being worked out into our lives. So we have to just ask very honestly, how are you doing at understanding that the Lord is with you? You know, we talked about being under the Father's discipline just a minute ago, but even there, don't you understand that in the prodigal son story, what the father does is he runs, and it's a picture of Jesus and how he runs to us. In John 10, Jesus says he leaves the 99 and goes after the one lost sheep. This is what the Lord is doing, even in discipline, and even in church discipline, what the church is to do is they aren't to leave that person, they're to pursue that person because Jesus is pursuing them. Yeah. Yeah. And this is the same Lord who does that, who is coming after us, because He's near. Yeah. And so it's not just, okay, don't just be anxious about anything, but understand that the Lord is

near. He's given you every single resource available. You know, the God who made you, the God who created you, the God who knows you. Paul says, and this blows my mind really, in Ephesians 1, it's from verse 3 to the end of the chapter, in the original Koinonian Greek, it's one long sentence actually, it's basically a long run-on sentence. And there Paul talks about the super abounding grace of God that is ours in Christ. And so just think about all the different ways in which we've already talked about how God is making himself, how he's brought himself near to you, how he's at hand, how he's come near to you, his unchangeable promise, 2 Corinthians 1.20 says the promises of God are yes and amen in Christ. David, this is all just really encouraging and I think that the Bible says he's near to the broken hearted, he's in ever-present help in time of trouble. Draw near to him, he will draw near to you. And this is where faith comes in because we aren't going to feel this at a given time. If you're going through a period of suffering and nothing is making any sense and it never ends, it feels like prayers are bouncing off the ceiling, that's very subjective. It's not necessarily the truth. We shouldn't trust our feelings at times like that because I'm telling you, Dave, if you live long enough in this walk with the Lord and in this prison planet that we're in, you will go through the dark night of the soul. And it is dark, you feel like the next step is off of a cliff. People go through that sort of thing. And this particular verse here that says, the Lord is at hand, five words that we need to remember by faith. Because if ever present help in time of trouble isn't true, then none of the Bible is true, right? You can't just cherry pick what you're going to believe. So comment on how faith comes in here when it doesn't seem that way. I mean, here's a prison epistle, and it's all about joy. You're in a prison of some sort, and it's all about having joy, and that is counterintuitive to our flesh. So talk about that a little bit. Yeah, you know, the things as honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, anything of excellence. The word think actually there, what you may not, your listeners may not know, is that actually Paul is talking about biblical meditation, which is not emptying your mind, it's filling your mind. It's a Psalm 1 thing. It's a matter of, hey, here's the truth of God's word. Are you chewing on it? Are you taking it? Are you meditating on it? Like Psalm one says day and night, you know, and we can do that very practically, we just open our Bibles, we read it. Even if you read by the way, one verse, one verse, okay, and you take that and you chew it over, you think about what does this mean? You know, what is this? What is the writer saying? What does this mean? And then you ask yourself, Am I living in light of the truth that I just read, or am I not? Am I taking that word and trusting what the

Lord has done? Or am I not? Like 2 Corinthians 1.20, great verse. Am I taking in light of 2 Corinthians 1.20, the promises of God are yes and amen in Christ. Am I taking the truth of scripture then, we ask the question based on the text. Am I taking the truth of that passage, 2 Corinthians 1.20, and am I believing the promises of God that he, like we've talked about, is near to me, that he's unchanging, that his word is without error? You know, we have Titus 1.9 says that God never lies, and this is a truth that God has given to us. So God will never lie. He's unchanging. He's near to us. He cares for us as we've talked about he's near but but he's also Interceding for us. He invites us to come He's pleading the merits of his own the treasure of his own blood before the father for us and he's inviting us to think Think about these things and when I think about that Jesus says that we're to love in the great commandment He says one of the things is for to love the Lord our God with our mind. How are we doing it at loving the Lord with our mind and using the mind to meditate, not just with our mind, not just, you know, thinking about it, but as we think about it, as we chew it over, it should do something in our hearts. And the Puritans, like Thomas Watson, they talked about meditation like a fire. It warms the heart, like when you're before a fire, right? You get warm, and this is what biblical meditation, according to Watson, would do for the Christian, is it would warm their hearts as they're chewing on the Word of God, and it will help them to stir their affections, their desire for God. And we have these new affections. We have to train these new desires that we've been given. One of the ways that God has given it to us, according to Paul, is to think about whatever is honorable and lovely and true and pure and commendable, if anything is worthy of praise. This is part of what Paul is concerned with, that in verse 9 he says practice these things and this is amazing he says this is what we're to do but then he gives us the power supply at the very end he says the God of peace will be with you I mean gosh so we so we just talked about in verse 4 at the end the Lord is a hand and then at the end of verse 9 he also gave us gospel hope and the God of peace will be with you that that's what Jesus has done he's given us peace that's made us right with God, but then he's also given us this peace This practical peace is being worked into our lives through the ministry of the Spirit And that's just amazing and we need to remember, you know, also verse 10, you know again, he says I rejoice in the Lord He he you were in concern for me that he says there but you had no opportunity verse 11 not that I'm speaking of being in need for I have learned in whatever situation I'm being content. I mean gosh when you when you read that that blows my mind because I go to 2nd Corinthians I think it's 11 And

he says that he was shipwrecked and he was beaten within an inch of his life 39 lashes You know, I mean, I think 40 is dead. So yeah, if I've if I've read that right, but I mean here you just think about that think about that How here's a guy who suffered immense pain by the way he the Lord promised him you're gonna suffer Where's where's that category in our in our personal life? And he says I have learned to be content and look at all it took to get him there and I think that's so encouraging because Paul had to learn contentment and look at all that he knew and experienced and and And so that should that should lift up our hearts a little bit that we can learn it. The journey of a lifetime. I was also thinking Dave of Proverbs 23, 7, as a man thinketh in his heart so shall he be. Is that saying you are what you think on? You are what you eat? You are what you think about? What does that passage mean? Proverbs 23, 7, as a man thinketh in his heart so shall he be." Hmm, yeah, I think so, yeah. We think in our heart, I mean we think of the gray matter and the brain cells that we have and this is our thinking process, but the Bible alludes to the fact that we think in our hearts about something and so shall we be. I don't know, I just wondered if you had any thoughts on that particular verse, who you are, what you think? Yeah, I think you can say that because Jesus talks about that in Luke 6, 45, out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. And so what comes out of the heart, it shows what we really value, what we really treasure. And of course, idolatry is where we would find ultimate meaning and value and worth. And that is over and against finding our ultimate satisfaction and joy in the peace of God that Christ has given to us and then that practical peace that is being applied to our lives through the ministry of the Spirit. So I think you're actually I think that makes good, you know, we what we love the most we treasure the most and so whether that's whether that's, you know, ask yourself the question again, you know, are you spending more time memorizing you know sports facts and and you know knitting or you're on your TV show, or what even ask yourself a question when you look at your bank account. Here's a really convicting question. Go and who hasn't heard your pastor say this, right? Look at, go through your bank account and just ask the question, hey, what am I spending the money on the most? And by the way, that can be a guilt question too. And I understand that. Because you can feel guilty because you're not spending enough on the things of the Lord. But God gave you your necessities, right? He gave you money so that you could have food and shelter and those kind of things. The question isn't, okay, I'm not giving enough. The question is, how are you using the stewardship that God has given you to not just buy a bunch of extra stuff, but also your

necessities. So we don't want to guilt people, we have to be careful about that. But the question really is designed to ask the question, how am I doing with this stewardship, the money and the finances that God gave me and trusted to me as a stewardship, or am I just blowing it, going out to eat and buying frivolous things, even things that I might want but aren't necessarily right now. And that doesn't mean that we can't ever get anything, you know, we can't have nice things or anything like that. It just means like we have to ask questions and assess, okay, if it is my motivation, my heart, because we can too quickly, like you were talking about earlier in 1 Timothy 6, you know, that we can start to love money more than we love God. And it's too easy. There's nothing wrong with having money. There's nothing wrong with using that money to be a stewardship. The Bible has plenty to say about that, but it's when it becomes a matter of, hey, I'm loving money more than the God who saved me and the God who has cured my salvation and the God who provides all of this abundant grace, that becomes the issue. We have to push back on that side of the thing, but we also have to push back on some people who think, I don't ever have to give, so I don't ever have to have that conversation. And the Bible never gives us a set amount that we're to give in 2 Corinthians 8 and 9. Instead, it's a disposition of the heart. It's a matter of, hey, you have been given this grace, so are you going to give out of the abundance of what God has given? Are you going to cut that check to give to the work of the ministry? And if not, then why? You've been given so much grace. And a lot of Christians, they think, I don't need to give. That's prosperity gospel. So we have to push back on the other side of that and say, yeah, you do actually have to give. It's a matter of stewardship to your local church. And you know, not to mention, you know, Paul said that we're not to muzzle an ox and the idea was is that pastors and the people in ministry, they're devoting themselves to this. They're called to this office. They're qualified. And so they're doing this work and they're worthy of our support. Right. And you have a building. I mean, it's cold up here. We can't meet in a tent. And so it's impractical, it's your building too, everyone who attends, and so it's a matter of meeting the needs so that you do have a place to gather. And speaking of giving, Dave, I want to just throw one more thing out there. Sometimes when we are anxious and depressed about things, we can give ourselves away and I think that's an excellent cure for anxiety, get our eyes off ourselves. During trials, give ourselves away to other people, and we'll find that sometimes the trial goes in the rear view mirror a little bit more. Now, we only have about a few minutes left, Dave, and it's just gone so fast. But what are your closing thoughts to



encourage people who may be really struggling right now to the point of even giving up or just having a hard time? What would you say to that one? Well friend, I do want to just speak directly to you. If you feel like today, right now, that you don't have hope, think about all the things that we just talked about. Think about the rich resources that you have in the Word of God, that God has given to you. It's been said that the Bible is a love letter from God and that is so true because what we see, yes, we can talk about sin and there is, you know, sin that separates us from God but this is what God did to deal with sin. He promised to send a Redeemer in Genesis 3:15 a champion one who would come and bleed and die for you in your place and for your sin. If you're in Christ Colossians 1:13 tells you very clearly that God has transferred you from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of the Lord Jesus and you have hope you have meaning you have purpose but it's not because of yourself. It's because of the perfect spotless righteousness of another, that you have this hope that Christ has won for you in his death, burial, and resurrection. And so you have every reason in the midst of whatever challenges you face, whether that's money, that's marital issues, that's anxiety, discouragement, whatever, you have hope, you have meaning. And I also want to say, you know, there's a lot of young people and others that are so discouraged by what's happening in our world today. You have so much hope. So please, I plead with you, we need you today. We need you today. We need you. So don't give up, don't give in, and don't quit. Don't commit suicide. You have hope because of Christ. So I would plead with you right now on the basis of Christ, perfect, spotless, righteous, please do not give up and do not quit. And do not quit on the church. You know, you might have been hurt by the church. We're all very imperfect in the church. We're saved by grace alone, through faith alone, and Christ alone. And I am so sorry if you've been hurt by the church. But Paul says in Ephesians 5 that the church is the one institution for which he bled and died for It's instrument a it's in the hands of God, you know resource ministries like this and servants of grace They're great But the local church is God's primary instrument agent in the world to bring hope and the gospel and to make disciples And so I would just plead with you don't quit on the church. Don't quit Because you've been hurt by a pastor. I know that it hurts. I know what it feels like. I've been there and done that. I've been doing this 24 years. I have the battle scars to prove it. But I've not given up on the church because I know, and I have to remind myself, like I said, that this is God's primary means, His instrument that He is using in the world to bring sinners to himself through the preached word of God and hope and make disciples. And so I just want

to say that today, but I also know that there's a lot of hurting people. And so please take what we've talked about. Take yourself by the hand. Get some help. Get some – be honest with yourself. Assess something. Dave, we have to end it today. I know there's so much more we could say to people to be an encouragement. Thank you so much for being with us today. Contentment, the journey of a lifetime by Dave Jenkins. [Servantsofgrace.org](http://Servantsofgrace.org) There are a lot of great resources there. I would encourage you and also to reach out to that ministry if you are struggling. That's it for today. We have Holly Pivick tomorrow. The NAR we're going to talk to her. And next week we have Andy Woods, Jeff Sowald, and much more. Let me end with this. Wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of your times and the strength of salvation the fear of the Lord is his knowledge shall be the stability of your times and the strength of salvation the fear of the Lord is his treasure Isaiah 33 6 have a great day